

DECISION



THE COMPTROLLER GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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FILE: B-209185

DATE: December 6, 1982

MATTER OF: James R. Rhodes -- Temporary Duty --
Lodging with a Relative

DIGEST: Employee who lodged at the home of a relative during a period of temporary duty is not entitled to reimbursement of the amount paid for lodgings since the employee has not demonstrated that his relative incurred additional expenses as a result of his stay.

Mr. V. Joseph Startari, an authorized certifying official of the Department of Energy, requests a decision on the reclaim voucher of Mr. James R. Rhodes, an employee of the Department of Energy, for the expenses of lodging with a relative during a period of temporary duty. We hold that the employee may not be reimbursed the expenses claimed since he has not demonstrated that additional costs resulted from his lodging.

Mr. Rhodes was authorized to travel from Denver, Colorado, to Washington, D.C., and return to Denver, from May 18 to May 22, 1981. During the period of his temporary duty, Mr. Rhodes stayed at the home of a relative, paying \$25 per day for a total of \$100. The Department of Energy denied Mr. Rhodes' claim for lodging expenses because he did not furnish information concerning additional expenses his relative incurred as a result of his stay.

Mr. Rhodes contends that the lodging expenses claimed are fair and reasonable, and result in substantial savings to the Government. The employee explains that he traveled to Washington, D.C., on short notice, and therefore was unable to secure hotel accommodations at a rate within his authorized subsistence expense allowance. He states that the amount paid to his relative is significantly less than commercial rates in the area, and includes charges for "daily laundry/linen service, water for personal showers and health necessities, electricity, TV and telephone services."

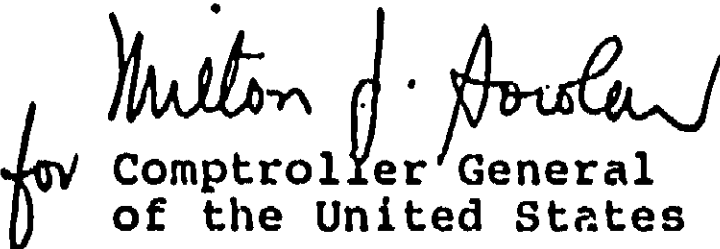
Where an employee lodges at the home of a friend or relative, we have consistently held that payable claims for such lodging expenses must be considerably less than charges

for commercial accommodations and correlated with additional costs actually incurred by the host. In 52 Comp. Gen. 78, 82 (1972) we stated:

** * * It does not seem reasonable or necessary to us for employees to agree to pay relatives the same amounts they would have to pay for lodging in motels or meals in restaurants or to base such payments to relatives upon maximum amounts which are reimbursable under the regulations. Of course, what is reasonable depends on the circumstances of each case. The number of individuals involved, whether the relative had to hire extra help to provide lodging and meals, the extra work performed by the relative and possibly other factors would be for consideration. * * *

In line with the above decision, we have consistently held that claims involving noncommercial lodgings should be supported by information indicating that the lodging charges are the result of expenses incurred by the party providing the lodging. Clarence R. Foltz, 55 Comp. Gen. 856 (1976). Neither the employee's inability to secure hotel accommodations at a rate within his travel expense allowance nor the fact that the amount paid to a friend or relative is less than commercial rates bears on the reasonableness of the lodging expenses claimed. Allen W. Rotz, B-190508, May 8, 1978; Barry A. Smith, B-184946, March 10, 1976.

Although Mr. Rhodes has furnished the amount paid to his relative for his lodgings, there is no evidence showing how the rate of \$25 per day was established. While the employee asserts generally that the rate includes charges for laundry, water, electricity, television, and telephone service, he has not provided a breakdown of actual costs, nor has he furnished other evidence of the charges allocable to the listed items. Under these circumstances, the employee has failed to demonstrate that his relative incurred additional expenses as a result of his stay, and his reclaim voucher as presented may not be certified for payment.


for Comptroller General
of the United States

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